

The Story of My Perfinned 25 Gld. Netherlands East Indies Stamp

Marty O'Grady (#2343)

If a stamp could talk, I sure wish the illustrated stamp, the 25 Gld. 1941 issue, NVPH289D, now residing in my general Netherlands East Indies collection would answer me. I purchased this stamp from a former member of the Perfins Club, Inc. through an advertisement placed in *The Perfins Bulletin*. I have had this stamp for 7 or 8 years.

Subsequent correspondence with the former member has not provided me with any further clues about this nice item.



Since then many questions have come up. Is the stamp genuine? Is the cancel genuine? Is the perfin genuine? What is this stamp doing on the West Coast of the United States when it should be in Holland? What was it used to transport -- Air-mail registered letter? -- Boat package? -- War documents? -- Bags of tea samples? -- Government documents? What was the date of movement? Was it on "Wielewaal" on the last flight out of Kemajoran? Why was this S.M.N. perfinned stamp used if possibly it had gone on a S.M.N. ship? 25 Gld. represents approximately \$13.50 in 1942 dollars. What gram weight would 25 Gld. cover? Many of these questions will forever remain unanswered.

One of the key stamps of the Koningin Wilhelmina Netherlands Indies issues of 1941, the printing of this stamp consisted of 14,000 copies. The stamp is scarce. Because of hostilities in the oil rich Netherlands Indies during the second World War (1941-45) it is apparent that few copies of this stamp exist and even fewer exist used and perfinned.

The stamp was demonetized on December 31, 1945; however, the general usage was probably discontinued in early 1942 (January/March). Batavia was occupied by the Japanese on March 6, 1942; total Dutch capitulation came on March 9, 1942. No Netherlands Indies perfins show an usage after 1942. It was during this period that many of the Netherlands Indies Post Offices were looted by the indigenous population and large supplies of stamps taken, making handling of postal matters a difficult task. In fact, the post offices were shut down from two to six months until reopened by the Japanese occupation officials, and then only on a limited basis. This issue was also overprinted by the Japanese occupation forces (many fakes exist!) I

have never seen one of these overprints perfinned. Most usage was on postcards.

The perfin "SMN" is listed in the Enschede 1985 catalog, as well as the 1991 *Perfins of the Netherlands and its Colonies* by Jan L. Verhoven. "SMN" stands for "N.V. Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland". This firm operated a shipping line between the Netherlands and the Netherlands East Indies, and points in between. Service was inaugurated on May 1, 1870. Direct service between the Dutch port of Nieuwedieop and Batavia started in 1871, after the opening of the Suez Canal. A postal contract was issued in October 1875 between the Dutch Government and "S.M.N.". Return service from Batavia started in December 1875. Monthly dispatch of postal matters began via the port of Naples on a monthly basis. By April 8, 1882, the route was changed to either Naples or Marseilles to Batavia.

The perfin itself is quite common. According to the latest listing by Mr. Verhoeven, this perfin type is listed under SMN 2 on page 269 and shows as being perfinned on 83 different stamps of the Netherlands Indies. One of these is 289D NVPH (Dutch Catalog), which corresponds to *Scott Catalogue* number 249. Verhoeven's catalog also shows a perfin "S.M.N." with a slightly different pattern. The Enschede catalog of 1985 shows this perfin as having been used in Tandjong Priok.

I am reasonably certain that this stamp started its long journey from Batavia (Jakarta) Netherlands East Indies (Indonesia). A faint "B.A.VIA" can be seen under a 14 power loupe.

Additional information and opinion was obtained through private communication with Mr. Martinus Verkuil. He wrote, "The reason why you have found this stamp in the USA is the following: Until the German occupation of Holland in 1940 the factories and companies in the Netherlands East Indies ordered their machinery, spare parts, etc. mainly in Holland. After the occupation of Europe much trade was done with the United States and Australia. Since spare parts, valuable sendings, etc. were sent by airmail (high postage) there was a need for high value stamps, such as the 1, 2, 5, 10, and 25 Guilder stamps, which were issued in 1941 for this purpose."

Credits and references:

Postal History of the Japanese Occupation of the Netherlands, by J. Haardjasudarma.

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Perfins of Netherlands, by Enschede, 1985.

"Netherlands & Colonies (Maritime Markings), booklet 12, by P. Cockrill.

Billigs Philatelic Handbook, Vol. 19. KJMR Co.

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